

WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

JANUARY 2002



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Unemployment Increase in December Reflects Seasonal Trends

The unemployment rate in Northwest Wisconsin edged up to 6.0 percent in **December**. That rate is still lower than it was earlier in 2001 when the northwest unemployment rate peaked at 8.8 percent. However, the current rate is higher than the 5.1 percent unemployed in November and the 4.9 percent unemployment rate in December 2000.

Comparative estimates for the State of Wisconsin showed that the unemployment rate in December declined from 4.3 to 4.2 percent, not seasonally adjusted, while the national rate increased from 5.3 to 5.4 percent. Seasonally adjusted the state rate was 4.7 percent and the national rate was 5.8 percent.

A 6.0 percent unemployment rate for the northwest means that roughly 5,500 residents were out of work and looking for a job. That is nearly 1,000 more jobseekers than last December and 500 more than in November. The number of unemployed does increase in December as workers are typically laid off for winter. However, the increase in the number of unemployed has been a little better than average in each month since October and those extra jobseekers are adding up.

The greatest increase in the number of unemployed since last December occurred in Douglas County yet the unemployment rate there of 4.9 percent is the lowest in Northwest Wisconsin and 33rd lowest in the state. The number of unemployed was 330 higher than one year ago but because the labor force is larger in Douglas County the increase in unemployment rate of 1.5 percentage points was less than the increase in Burnett County. In Burnett County the rate rose 2.2 percentage points since last December as the number of unemployed increased by 164 residents. This produced a current unemployment rate of 6.2 percent in December.

Bayfield County, with 7.2 percent unemployed in December, had the highest rate in the northwest region and 4th highest in the state. The December rate was one percentage point higher than in November and 1.1 percentage points higher than one year ago.

All counties in the region, except Iron, reported an increase in the December unemployment rate, as did 43 coun-

ties in the state. In Iron County, the unemployment rate declined from 7.8 percent in November to 6.7 percent in December.

The unemployment rate in Ashland County in December increased to 7.1 percent while in Price County it rose to 5.0 percent even though the number of unemployed was slightly fewer than last December when the unemployment rate was 4.9 percent.

Washburn, Taylor, and Rusk counties reported the largest increases in unemployment rate in the state. In Washburn County, the rate increased from 5.0 percent in November to 6.4 percent in December, in Taylor the rate rose from 4.5 to 6.0 percent and in Rusk the rate increased from 4.8 to 6.6 percent.

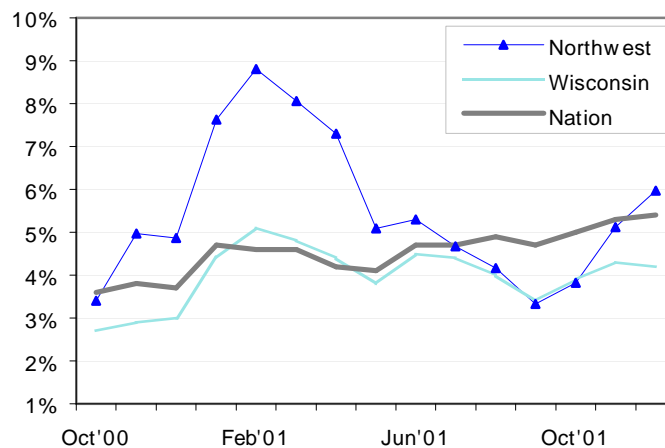
One glance at the graph and it becomes apparent that unemployment rates in December are lower than earlier this year. The normal trend in unemployment is to hit a low in October, then begin an upward climb toward a high in February or March. This means that the area will see higher unemployment rates as we get closer to spring.

The annual average unemployment rate for Northwest Wisconsin in 2001 was 5.8 percent after peaking at 8.8 percent in February and setting a low of 3.3 percent in September. The annual rate in 2001 matched the 5.8 percent annual average rate in 1998 but is higher than the 2000 annual rate of 5.5 percent and the 1999 rate of 5.1 percent. In 1992, when the last recession officially ended, the average unemployment for the region was 8.0 percent. Even after a recession has officially ended, however, unemployment rates continue to climb. Un-

employment rates in the region didn't begin to decline until April 1994.

In the combined ten-county region the number of individuals filing claims for unemployment benefits increased by 800 residents since last December, less than the increase in the number of total jobless in the area. That's because the number of jobless includes more than just those filing claims for unemployment benefits.

Unemployment Rates-Not seasonally adjusted



	Oct'00	Nov'00	Dec'00	Oct'01	Nov'01	Dec'01
Northwest	3.4%	5.0%	4.9%	3.8%	5.1%	6.0%
Wisconsin	2.7%	2.9%	3.0%	3.9%	4.3%	4.2%
Nation	3.6%	3.8%	3.7%	5.0%	5.3%	5.4%

December Data	Wisconsin	Ashland	Bayfield	Burnett	Douglas	Iron	Price	Rusk	Sawyer	Taylor	Washburn
Civilian Labor Force*	3,035,200	7,700	7,400	7,300	23,300	3,400	6,700	7,300	9,900	10,900	8,300
Employed	2,908,700	7,100	6,800	6,800	22,200	3,200	6,300	6,800	9,300	10,300	7,700
Unemployed	126,500	500	500	500	1,100	200	300	500	600	700	500
Unemployment rate(%)	4.2%	7.1%	7.2%	6.2%	4.9%	6.7%	5.0%	6.6%	6.0%	6.0%	6.4%
Total jobs, all industries	2,851,590	8,400	3,850	4,730	18,890	2,480	6,440	6,190	6,810	9,250	6,280
Construction & Mining	124,610	330	240	260	1,060	290	280	230	310	330	260
Manufacturing	576,850	1,620	260	1,050	1,260	510	2,430	2,490	810	3,470	1,240
Transportation & Pbl.Util	136,910	210	240	130	2,440	60	130	250	170	460	290
Wholesale Trade	136,970	190	50	50	1,140	70	200	120	120	470	140
Retail Trade	515,340	1,680	690	950	3,760	600	1,000	830	1,630	1,570	1,400
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	153,320	290	150	80	500	40	200	130	320	360	230
Services	788,130	2,240	750	750	5,350	420	1,150	790	1,470	1,490	1,280
Government	419,470	1,840	1,470	1,450	3,390	490	1,050	1,360	1,980	1,100	1,460
Change from previous month											
Civilian Labor Force*	-16,100	-100	0	0	-100	-100	0	100	0	100	0
Employed	-12,000	-100	-100	-100	-200	-100	-200	0	-100	-100	-200
Unemployed	-4,200	0	0	100	0	-100	0	200	100	200	100
Unemployment rate(%)	-0.1%	0.3%	1.0%	0.9%	0.4%	-1.1%	0.9%	1.8%	1.1%	1.4%	1.4%
Total jobs, all industries	-4,980	-100	-50	-40	40	-90	-70	-20	-70	-10	-110
Construction & Mining	-7,480	-50	-20	-30	-70	-50	-30	-20	-30	-80	-50
Manufacturing	-3,170	10	0	30	20	-50	-30	10	-30	0	0
Transportation & Pbl.Util	600	0	-10	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	-10
Wholesale Trade	-150	0	0	0	0	0	-20	0	0	10	0
Retail Trade	3,000	-10	-20	20	-20	10	-10	-10	20	10	-20
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	620	10	0	-20	0	10	-10	0	10	0	10
Services	3,200	-50	10	0	80	10	0	30	-40	10	-20
Government	-1,600	0	-20	-30	-20	-10	30	-30	0	30	-10
Change from one year ago											
Civilian Labor Force*	27,100	-100	0	100	-100	100	-100	200	300	200	100
Employed	-10,300	-200	-200	-100	-300	100	-200	100	200	200	-100
Unemployed	37,300	0	0	200	300	0	0	100	100	200	0
Unemployment rate(%)	1.2%	1.3%	1.2%	2.2%	1.4%	1.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.6%	1.1%	0.8%
Total jobs, all industries	-11,490	-340	130	-50	340	110	10	80	220	130	20
Construction & Mining	-1,220	-30	10	20	40	10	50	10	0	40	10
Manufacturing	-34,970	-40	10	-20	-50	50	-50	40	-10	-10	-40
Transportation & Pbl.Util	-360	-10	10	0	260	0	0	0	10	20	-20
Wholesale Trade	-2,740	10	10	-10	70	10	10	0	-10	10	10
Retail Trade	1,190	50	0	30	30	10	20	0	60	10	20
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	2,900	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	20	10	0
Services	13,790	-30	10	-90	10	-40	0	-30	50	30	40
Government	9,910	-300	70	30	-10	70	-20	50	90	20	10
* Includes participants residing in area. ** Includes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Totals may not add due to rounding. Calculations based on unrounded numbers.											
2001 Annual Average Unemployment Rates	4.3%	7.3%	6.1%	5.3%	4.7%	6.6%	6.8%	6.8%	5.5%	5.4%	5.9%

The number of employed in the region also includes more than the number of workers in nonfarm wage and salary jobs. It includes an estimate of the number of self-employed workers in Northwest Wisconsin and the workers who travel out of the region to find a job.

Nonfarm wage and salary employment is an estimate of the number of jobs with employers located in the ten-county region. Workers who commute from counties outside the region

fill some of those jobs and dual jobholders fill even more. Northwest Wisconsin residents fill most of the jobs, however, which makes the estimates a good indicator of area employment.

The number of nonfarm jobs declined by 500 in December as workers were laid off from seasonal positions. Construction workers absorbed most of the loss with a reduction of 430 jobs from November to December.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI

Direct questions and comments to: **Beverly Gehrke, Labor Market Analyst**
 Hayward Job Center, 15618 US Hw 63, Suite 108, Hayward, Wisconsin 54843
 715-634-5289 715-634-6094(FAX) e-mail: gehrkb@dwd.state.wi.us